

Claims 1 and 3 to 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Japan 8-160680 (Matsukuma) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,950,036 (Konishi); and Claim 2 was rejected under § 103(a) over Matsukuma in view of Konishi and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,212,338 (Hagihara). Without conceding the correctness of the foregoing rejections, Applicant has canceled Claims 1 to 7, thereby rendering the rejections moot.

New independent Claim 8 concerns an image forming apparatus equipped with a process cartridge detachable therefrom where the process cartridge includes an element relating to image formation. Image forming means drives the process cartridge to form an image and counting means counts a drive time of the process cartridge driven by the image forming means. Changeover means changes over an image forming condition of the image forming means on the basis of an accumulation of the drive time counted by the counting means. When the accumulation of the drive time counted by the counting means reaches a predetermined value, the changeover means determines a changeover timing so that the image forming condition may be changed over at a timing which is not during image formation.

New independent Claim 13 concerns a control method for an image forming apparatus equipped with a process cartridge detachable therefrom where the process cartridge includes an element relating to image formation. A drive time of the process cartridge driven in the image forming apparatus is counted and it is judged whether an accumulation of the drive time counted reaches a predetermined value. When it is judged that the accumulation of the drive time reaches a predetermined value, an image forming

condition of the image forming apparatus is changed over at a timing when the image forming apparatus is not conducting image formation.

The references applied in the rejections of canceled Claims 1 to 7 are not understood to disclose or suggest the foregoing features of the invention. In particular, the applied references are not understood to disclose or suggest at least the features of changing over an image forming condition on the basis of an accumulated drive time of a detachable process cartridge, where when the accumulated drive time of the process cartridge reaches a predetermined value, the image forming condition is changed over at a timing that is not during image formation.

Matsukuma concerns an image forming device in which a number of printing sheets is stored in a memory of a process cartridge. According to Matsukuma, the value of a primary bias is set based on the number of printed sheets in order to keep the surface potential of a photoreceptor constant. However, Matsukuma is not seen to disclose or suggest changing over an image forming condition on the basis of an accumulated drive time of a detachable process cartridge, where when the accumulated drive time of the process cartridge reaches a predetermined value, the image forming condition is changed over at a timing that is not during image formation.

Konishi concerns an image processing apparatus in which calibration of the apparatus is initiated at a time designated by an operator. However, Konishi is not seen to disclose or suggest changing over an image forming condition on the basis of an accumulated drive time of a detachable process cartridge, where when the accumulated

drive time of the process cartridge reaches a predetermined value, the image forming condition is changed over at a timing that is not during image formation.

Hagihara was applied in the Office Action for its disclosure of particular types of non-volatile memory. However, Hagihara is not understood to disclose or suggest changing over an image forming condition on the basis of an accumulated drive time of a detachable process cartridge, where when the accumulated drive time of the process cartridge reaches a predetermined value, the image forming condition is changed over at a timing that is not during image formation.

In view of the foregoing, Matsukuma, Konishi, and Hagihara, either alone or in combination are not understood to disclose or suggest the foregoing features of the invention. Accordingly, new independent Claims 8 and 13 are believed to be allowable over these applied references.

The other new claims in the application are dependent from independent Claim 8 discussed above and are believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa,
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Respectfully submitted,



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